

THE SOUTH

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The European influence is the principal factor in American Greatness. But this greatness could not be realized without a modification of this influence to meet the hardships and opportunities of a new land. Settlers in northern areas partly solved the problem by establishing themselves in American climate like those from which they came; for example, the English in Pennsylvania and the Germans in Wisconsin. The settlers of the South, on the other hand, were forced to face the problems of a subtropical climate. Because of this the sufferings of the early Southerners were great. The mortality rate among the Virginians was as high as 75 per cent. "The low and marshy ground, the hot sun, the unwholesome drinking water," says a Virginia historian ⁽¹⁾, "combined to produce an unending epidemic of dysentery and malaria," Henry Cabot Lodge, who loved not the South, asserts that husbands in Colonial South Carolina died earlier than their wives because the women "contented themselves with the brackish water of the coast" while the men "led a rather wild and dissipated life, and drank deeply" in a malarial climate. ⁽²⁾

Adjustments were made to the Southern climate. Among these adjustments were the use of quinine and the building of houses on hills as protections against malaria. In the South people of the North European race lived and multiplied for three hundred years. "Not elsewhere in the world over," writes a geographer, ⁽³⁾ "have Englishmen dwelt continuously in large numbers under semitropical conditions for as much as three generations." Southerners did this while maintaining the English way of life to as great a degree as any group of Americans.

The Southerners' problem of modifying European habits to fit the New World was followed by another problem of like nature. It was to adopt benefits derived from the booming civilization of the northern half of the United States without abandoning progress in making adjustments to the demands of Southern climate and history. While winning its cultural and social independence from England, the region below the Potomac had to struggle against the tendency to become a colonial dependency of the North. Northern customs were in many respects more alluring than those of the mother country. England represented past glories; the region above the Potomac represented progress: a level of material wealth, comfort and democratic idealism greater than anywhere in Europe. The South, fulfilling its role as an integral part of a great nation, achieved much progress through imitating the North. It learned to use Northern machines, Northern literature, art and education, and Northern political reforms. This imitation at times was indiscriminate and unwise. But the pull forward of the Yankee spirit was no more successful in destroying the Southern qualities than was the pull backward of the mother country in preventing Southern qualities from

(1) Thomas J. Wertenbaker, The Planters of Colonial Virginia (New York, 1937) pp. 30-40

(2) Henry C. Lodge, A Short History of the English Colonies in America (New York, 1909), P. 185

(3) E. N. Vallandigham, cited in Rupert B. Vance, Human Geography of the South (Chapel Hill, 1932), P. 352.

evolving. There is, said Donald Davidson in 1938, the reality of regionalism acknowledged in the vocabulary of the people if not in the solemn documentations of statesmen.

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The American devotion to centralization, Davidson adds, has not stirred the mountains from their bases, unchannelled the rivers, or removed the plains, the lakes the climate itself. The geographical diversity which these factors create divides America into a variety of sections of which the South is the most distinct. In the region below the Potomac, winter is neither long nor very cold; in summer for fifty afternoons the temperature climbs to ninety degrees in the shade; throughout the year there is greater humidity, more sunshine, less wind than elsewhere in the United States. At certain seasons there are torrential rains, and along the Gulf of Mexico the growing season lasts nine months.

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These "imprints of sun, rain and wind" exert gross as well as subtle influences. Long hot seasons favored the creation of the kingdoms of tobacco, rice, sugar and cotton, slowed the tempo of living and of speech, promoted outdoor life, modified architecture to make indoor living cooler, and encouraged the employment of Negroes on the land. The poorer soils, when eroded and leached by heavy rains, gave white and black alike excuse for poverty and leisure.

Geography coupled with the complications of social development makes possible the recognition of distinctive features in Southern civilization. The doctrine of white supremacy, asserts the historian Ulrich B. Phillips (6), is "the central theme" of Southern history. In the presence of large masses of blacks, the white people developed a superior and unique attitude toward the other race. This attitude, according to Phillips, is the essence of Southernism. To white supremacy Avery O. Craven adds another explanation--the prevalence of the country-gentlemen ideal, a pattern of society borrowed from the English, justified by the physiocratic philosophy of the French, and taking root naturally in the agricultural South. The poet John Crowe Ransom regards Southernism as the creation, by the men of the Old South, of the ideal of a conservative civilization which "put the surplus energy in the free life of the mind" and which gave scope to the refinements of settled life in rural comfort. (7)
By others, Southernism has been variously attributed to the fundamental piety of the people, their emphasis on home life, the peculiarities of their food, the survival of rural ways even in growing cities, a powerful nativism largely untouched within the past 175 years by immigration, the survival of the Southern type of lady and gentlemen, who are declared to be "the only types of 'complete souls' that the United States has yet produced." (8)

All observers admit that Southernism is a reality too elusive to be explained in objective terms.

(4) The Attack on Leviathan (Chapel Hill, 1938), pp. 4,5.

(5) Vance, op. cit., 351.

(6) The Course of the South to Secession, (New York, 1939) p. 152.

(7) John C. Ransom, "The South Defends Its Heritage," Harpers Magazine, CLIX, pp. 108-18, (June, 1929).

(8) Count Hermann Keyserling, "The South--America's Hope" Atlantic Monthly, CXLIV, 607-08, (November, 1939)

It is something like a song or an emotion, more easily felt than recorded. "Poets have done better," remarks James G. Randall ⁽⁹⁾, "in expressing the oneness of the South than historians in explaining it." One of the characters in George W. Cable's John March, Southerner ⁽¹⁰⁾ speaks of "a certain ungeographical South--within-the-South--as pertable and intangible as our souls in our bodies." It is a sentiment so deeply felt that it cannot be repelled. In exile in the iron New England dark, Quentin Compson is asked, "Why do you hate the South?" "I don't hate it," replied this character in William Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom! "I don't hate it," he repeats. I don't hate it, he thinks; I don't; I don't hate it! I don't hate it! ⁽¹¹⁾

A wealth of imaginative literature and factual scholarship have described the Old South as contrasted with the Old North. There was the difference between the lands of Cavalier and of Puritan, of slavery and freedom, of agriculture and of industry, of planter and of small farmer, of static contentment and of progressive aspirations. Contemporaries were so aware of the sectional divergencies that they spoke of two nations as distinct as the English and the French with a Congress at Washington, not to discuss common interests but to proclaim mutual grievances. ⁽¹²⁾

Beginning in the 1820's Southern leaders recognized the reality of sectional divergencies by developing a social and political philosophy. Slavery, the region's most distinctive institution, once regarded as an embarrassing necessity, was interpreted as conferring positive good on all elements of Southern society including the slaves. It was justified by arguments drawn from the Bible, Aristotle and science. The relation between master and slave was explained as a bond made in heaven along with that of the human family. The pro-slavery argument was so cunningly merged with American ideals that servitude appeared to be the very condition of democracy. Since the Negro was made for manual labor, white skin protected the individual who was not a slave against social degradation. The ideal state was that of the slave master and his lady who found a mirror of their lives in the chivalric society of the Middle Ages.

The North through the tyranny of the majority was adjudged guilty of attempting to impose unbearable hardships upon the minority section. These hardships were the protective tariff, the building of means of transportation at Federal expense, the adoption of commercial strategies through which Southern wealth went into Northern pockets, and the weakening of slavery through the harboring of fugitives, the keeping of slaves out of the Western territories, and agitations for the ultimate abolition of the institution. To protect themselves against these aggressive acts, the Southerners evolved State's Rights. This doctrine at

(9) James G. Randall, The Civil War and Reconstruction (Boston, 1937) pp. 3-4.

(10) George W. Cable, John March, Southerner, (New York, 1894) p. 327.

(11) Cited by Malcolm Cowley, "William Faulkner's Legend of the South" in Allen Tate, ed., A Southern Vanguard, (New York, 1947), pp. 16-17.

(12) Charleston Mercury, cited in Avery O. Craven, The Repressible Conflict (Baton Rouge, 1939) p. 28.

first took the form of threatened or actual nullification by the states of acts of the Federal government and the creation of a system of concurrent majorities through which the weaker section might veto the acts of the majority; when these devices failed, the Southerners asserted the right to withdraw from the Federal Union.

The distinctiveness of the Old South is perhaps best illustrated by the life of its ruling class. This aristocracy achieved its position through agricultural endeavor and not through commerce and industry as in the North. Its members lived in country seats well adapted to the environment. These houses were not more than fifteen rooms, but were made imposing by rows of white columns as tall as the houses themselves and by lavish surroundings. There were screens of spreading trees, borders of boxwood, and tangled masses of flowering and sweet-smelling shrubs. High ceilings, heavily shaded porches and drafty passage ways gave comfort in the long summers. The life of the dwellers within approximated the feudal splendors of the Old World. The planters were lords of all they surveyed, and they indulged in hunting, tournaments, military drills, dinners and other entertainments in the cavalier tradition. That their knightly pretensions were not unreal is proved by their participation in the Civil War. It was an adventure as chivalric as anything that engaged the attention of Arthur and his Knights or of Charlemagne and his Roland.

Another illustration of the distinctiveness of ante-bellum culture was in religion. Historic Protestantism was reduced to the consistencies of the Southern environment without sacrificing inherited fundamentals. Great religious revivals lifted the common people out of frontier indifference to religion. Violent conversions, vernacular preachings, camp-meetings, circuit-riders, and the discipline of church schools were designed to win and to hold Southerners of both races in the Christian communions. The Southern mind, which at the beginning of the nineteenth century had been under the influence of liberal deists, was captured for the orthodoxies by an aggressive group of theologians. Both church and state-controlled colleges were dedicated to the "old time religion." These changes prepared the way for a complete reconciliation between slavery and the Southern churches, for the breaking of ties with the anti-slavery churches of the North, and for the use among the Negroes of the bondage of the soul as a means of making more secure the bondage of the body. On Biblical grounds the Ethiopian was declared to be the descendant of Ham, fated to be the hewer of wood and the drawer of water. He was endowed with a wide range of sacred song proclaiming rich joys in heaven as compensation for the tribulations of this earth.

Historians in their efforts to explain the coming of the Civil War over-emphasize the differences between the Old North and the Old South. They forget that conflicts can be explained as easily in terms of likenesses as of differences. Perhaps the great American war between the sections was another example of Greek meeting Greek, of Anglo-Saxon quarrelling with Anglo-Saxon with the same ideals and ambitions. The fight began in Kansas where two groups of Americans used the controversy over slavery as an excuse for struggle to possess the lands. Both sides in the controversy, with Anglo-Saxon shrewdness, whipped out Bibles and guns to justify their greed.

The society of the Old South, like that of the Old North, was dynamic, imperialistic, and given to expansion both horizontal and perpendicular. Horizontal expansion for the Southerner meant frequent migration westward; even the slave was not a peasant in the sense of being tied to the soil. Perpendicular expansion meant that humble men could rise to the top. It was possible, says an historian of the Old South, for men to mount "from log cabin to plantation mansion on a stairway of cotton bales, accumulating slaves as they climbed,"⁽¹³⁾ This was possible because of the opportunities of an expanding society and because of the relative absence of class lines and class consciousness. The sense of superiority of all white men over the Negroes created a sense of brotherhood not unlike the Greek concept of democracy. In so far as white men were concerned, the Jeffersonian ideal of the equality of man was never abandoned. Universal white manhood suffrage was established in all the Southern states, and in the persons of John Randolph, William L. Yancey, and Albert G. Brown the Dixie demagogue was almost as important as he was destined to be in the days of Ben Tillman and Theodore G. Bilbo. Education for all white children was progressively applied, and to the Prussian purpose of using the school to promote skills and social discipline was, without reluctance, added the American notion of the school as an instrument for ironing out social distinction.⁽¹⁴⁾

Perhaps Abraham Lincoln was correct in assuming that no impassable barrier could be erected between the sections. The Old South did not have within itself the will or the resources for national self-expression. It had no political, economic or cultural capital. It was dependant upon the North for manufactured articles, cloth made from its cotton, styles for its women's clothes, the books and magazines it read, and the textbooks and many of the teachers of its schools. The Southern Literary Messenger said in 1854 that Harper's Magazine had five times more subscribers south of the Potomac than did the Southern Literary Messenger.⁽¹⁵⁾ Bitterly did such Southern writers as James D. B. De Bow and Thomas P. Kettel complain of the high prices the North was able to charge for its goods, but the commercial and cultural conventions of the 1850's for the purpose of creating regional autonomy had scant success. Lincoln believed that the better natures of the Southern states were against their bid for nationality. The fact that a national soul did not survive the military defeat of 1865 makes one wonder if it ever had a full existence.

The Old South of the differences and contrasts enumerated was defeated at Appomattox. In its place was created a New South in which human freedom was achieved and in which industrialization and sectional reconciliation became aspirations. The South's central problem since 1865, whether political, industrial, or social, was to adjust its standards to those of the victorious North. Many of these adjustments have been happy experiences out of which Southern leaders and people have gained much. As results of war and reconstruction the South recognized the supremacy of the Union, free Negro labor, and the equality of all men

(13) Charles S. Sydnor, Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848 (Baton Rouge, 1948), p. 14

(14) Clement C. Eaton, Freedom of Thought in the Old South, (Durham, 1942) p. 76

(15) Avery O. Craven, The Coming of the Civil War (New York, 1942), p. 296.

before the law. Later the national ideals of business success and industrial advance won victories over the agrarian tradition; and the New South demonstrated in practice the New England inspired concept of universal education. Imported liberal views of religion and science were accepted by college-bred leaders; imported class alignments and recreations activities altered social life; in deference to the critical standards of metropolitan areas, the South created a literature that affronted its romantic pride; despite a painful sensitivity, it allowed the Negro to progress along lines consistent with Northern concepts of uplift; and with unrestrained patriotism, Southerners participated in the battles of three national wars and in the councils of three national administrations. Because of these concessions to Northern standards, there was indeed some basis for the conclusion that by the 1930's the states of the former Confederacy had so far receded from the sectionalism of 1861 that they were about to become a mere segment of a unified republic.

To justify this progression out of an unhappy past there arose two groups of publicists. The first were the champions of the New South Movement and the second were the Southern Liberals. Without repudiating the heritage of the past, the first group demanded progress along lines of industrial development and liberal thinking. In the name of a liberal tradition said to be as inherently Southern as Thomas Jefferson, the second group assaulted religious orthodoxy, puritanism, demagoguery, rural conservatism, and other aspects of the contemporary scene. They were modern enough to advocate state action in social and economic fields quite beyond the Jeffersonian conception of an agrarian society. They advocated libraries, good roads, hospitals, school expansion, social legislation and other such material comforts as the common people in all progressive societies demand of their rulers.

The capital blunder of the leaders of the Old South was the emphasis they put upon slavery as an explanation of the sectional variations. This accent upon a despised institution brought upon the region the charge of blood guilt and led its powerful enemies to compel the tragic exorcism of 1865. The leaders of the New South Movement, once the conqueror relented sufficiently to allow white supremacy, did not pursue a policy which brought upon them a second civil war. They did not try to restore the old order. If we are to believe William Faulkner, the South has long been doing penance for its great offence against human freedom. The truly forgotten men of Southern history are Thomas R. Dew and the other writers who proclaimed the innate inequality of man as the prime justification of slavery. The Jeffersonian dream of the equality of all men became a Southern axiom. About this declaration was as much unreality, or even hypocrisy, as there had been in statements of the American Revolution such as Jefferson, Patrick Henry, and Willie Jones talking like Jacobins while each of them held a numerous band of blacks in durance vile. Leaders of the New South Movement such as Henry W. Grady, Hoke Smith, and Charles B. Aycock pressed for the disfranchisement of the blacks and at the same time preached "glittering generalities" about progress and democracy. They were not as forthright as their pro-slavery predecessors. Nevertheless they were not sweepingly reactionary toward the Negro. They allowed him schools, complete religious freedom, and freedom to own

property and to move away. This was because, as Gunnar Myrdal sapiently observes ⁽¹⁶⁾ the Southern white man has learned to adhere so deeply to the American Creed of democracy that his conscience does not permit radical reaction against the Negro or the denial to him of hope of more equalities in the future.

So much emphasis has been placed upon the willingness and the ability of the South to move out of its past that there has been created a legend of greatest practical importance. It is the belief that the New South was and is in a constant state of change which will ultimately result in the annihilation of the regional differences in order that the section with the tragic past can embrace, without superstitious inhibitions, all the benefits of the national life. "Everywhere the South," said wistfully two of the most competent chroniclers of the national annals in 1933 ⁽¹⁷⁾, "gave way before the onrush of the North It would not be stretching the point too much to say that before the nineteenth century closed the South had become merely an appendage of New York and the Ohio Valley." This great change has been proclaimed by Northern capitalists who have implemented their words by bulldozing much of the Southern landscape out of its natural shape to make clearings for new industries. It has been accepted so thoroughly by the spokesmen of the South that a Harvard scholar ⁽¹⁸⁾ is able to use their utterances as the basis of a book detailing progress toward sectional unity.

The legend of the changing South has from time to time been the basis for optimistic thinkers to assume the actual or imminent solution of the principal problems which make the section distinct. It made it possible for Frederick Douglass to assume as early as 1879 that conditions in the Southern states were so steadily improving "that the colored man there will ultimately realize the fullest measure of liberty and equality accorded and secured in any section of our common country." ⁽¹⁹⁾ It allowed an eminent student of Southern history ⁽²⁰⁾ to assert in 1914 that the time had come for the section to "emancipate itself from the deadly one-party system" because the question of Negro suffrage had been settled by disfranchising amendments to state constitutions. The legend reached its ultimate extreme in a book written in 1926 entitled The Advancing South and containing a chapter called "The Ebbing Tide of Color". ⁽²¹⁾ It survives in 1948 in the assertion of an Arkansas editor that the increased voting of Negroes in the Democratic primaries makes the race "a potent, positive factor in the region" and makes "the passing of the one-party system inevitable." "A great mass of ill-equipped voters," concludes the editor, ⁽²²⁾ "are thrusting against the hard shell of the Southern political system, and it is cracking in many places."

(16) An American Dilemma (New York, 1944), I, 461-66.

(17) Louis H. Hacker and Benjamin B. Kendrick, The United States Since 1865 (New York, 1932), p. 64.

(18) Paul H. Buck, The Road to Reunion, 1865-1900, (Boston, 1938).

(19) Cited in Journal of Negro History, IV, 56-57 (January, 1919).

(20) James W. Garner in Studies in Southern History and Politics, (New York, 1914), pp. 367-87.

(21) Edwin Hims, The Advancing South (New York, 1926).

(22) Harry S. Ashmore in The Southern Packet, IV, 1 (November, 1948)

These sanguine hopes have not been fulfilled. The South has not given the Negro the liberty and equality accorded him elsewhere; the one-party system and the Negro question have not been eliminated from Southern politics; the color line has not ebbed. Southern culture, as Donald Davidson said in 1938,⁽²³⁾ "has an enormous vitality, even in those attitudes which sociologists call survivals; Its ways of humor, its 'stubborn bantering threats to outsiders,' and various 'defense mechanisms.'" Numerous cultural factors, together with "a certain revivification of sectional antagonisms," declared the South's leading sociologist in 1936,⁽²⁴⁾ "has contributed to an apparent solidifying of the regional culture." There have been changes, but, as Stark Young wisely observed in 1930, the changing South is still the South.

The illusory character of the assumption that the South is changing into something that it was not is suggested by an analysis of the bases of this contention. Its advocates were caught in the same false optimism which in the late nineteenth century charmed the spokesmen of the whole of European civilization. It was the dogma of progress: that man by the application of science and education could escape the tragedies of the past; that Western Europe was learning to live in peace and harmony; that the South was learning to reach the American ideal of provincial self-effacement and interracial democracy. Events since 1914 prove that these optimists were not interpreting realistically the signs of the times: The Western nations were not evolving into the republic of brotherly love; the South was not growing into one of the provinces of a democratic paradise.

Moreover, from motives not so naive, the keepers of the South's reputation saw material advantages in encouraging the belief that the section's standards of behavior were moving toward the national norm. Thereby they avoided the risk of a tragic reckoning like the one imposed on Southerners who talked oppositely. Thereby they created a climate of opinion which facilitated the ingress of Northern capital. This was successful diplomach which paid in imported industries which gave salaries to Southern leaders and substantial wages to Southern workmen. When outside investigators discovered awkward facts to sustain the belief that theirs was but a Potemkin front, the defenders of the South, instead of trying to justify the harsh realities, minimized their importance and confidently predicted their extinction. When forthright demagogues aroused resentment against this truckling to Northern prejudices, the embarrassment of the sectional conciliators was only temporary. The influence of the demagogues waned before the normal conviction of Southerners that it was neither good business nor good manners to parade the sectional faults.

It is well to warn against taking too seriously the pronouncements of Southern reformers. Frequently they are rare specimens protected by aristocratic family connections or by the isolation of academic or editorial sanctums from the mass sentiments around them. Gunnar Myrdal scornfully notes⁽²⁵⁾ that the

(23) The Attack on Leviathan, 302

(24) Howard W. Odum, Southern Regions of the United States (Chapel Hill, 1936) p. 531

(25) Op. cit., I, 470

Southern liberal is afraid of "the deadly blow of being called a 'nigger lover'" and therefore likes to keep the Negro out of sight in agitations designed for the benefit of the race. Liberal pronouncements on the national or sectional level of group organizations are not likely to be implemented on local levels. Myrdal contrasts the bold words and actions of the central office of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People with the timidity of this association's chapters in Southern towns. (26) He also notes that white ministers are not likely to burden their congregations with the liberal exhortations on the race question which they are supposed to bring back from the general assemblies of their churches. (27) When such exhortations are brought home they are not likely to be heard. In 1837 an English clergyman living in Georgia complained to Harriet Martineau of the failure of his well disposed congregation to react in any manner to his sermons. This complaint may be repeated 112 years later. Observant persons now are aware of the indifference of millions of readers to the liberal editorials of their favorite newspapers. They realize the indifference of the thousands who each Sabbath attend the Bible classes to the liberal or even radical study materials which national church organizations put into their hands. As Richard M. Weaver observes, (28) "In the sphere of religion the Southerner has always been hostile to the spirit of inquiry. He felt that religion which is intellectual is no religion. His was a natural piety, expressing itself in uncritical belief and in the experience of conversion."

The speaker who claims that the history of North-South relations since 1865 has been a record of steady decline in the intersectional asperities is one of three persons: an orator who sentimentally blinds himself to the facts; a diplomat who suppresses the facts for a purpose; an historian who ignores half the facts in order to fit the other half into a preconceived conception of progress. The full facts of Southern history since the Civil War reveal a series of ups and downs in an everlasting battle between the forces making for sectional reconciliation and those making for section estrangement.

The "let-us-have-peace" sentiments of the surrender at Appomattox were followed by the bitterness of Reconstruction. Indeed the bitterness created by this attempt to give the Negroes some of the aspects of the American dream of equality was more intense and more lasting than that created by the carnage of civil war. The goodwill created by the surrender of the North on the Negro question in 1877 and by the election of a Democratic President in 1884 was matched by the ill will created by the Lodge Force Bill of 1890 and by the disfranchising amendments to the Southern state constitutions. The intersectional and interracial friendship which Booker T. Washington created was dimmed by Theodore Roosevelt's and a whole generation of muckraker's affronts to the Southern standards of caste.

The sense of national pride engendered in Southern hearts by the election of Woodrow Wilson and the victories of the First World War were followed by an attack on the South which is characterized as "more

(26) An American Dilemma, II, 823-24

(27) Ibid., II, 869.

(28) "The Older Religiousness of the South," Seavane Review, LI 249 (Spring, 1943)

abusive and unrelenting than anything the Southern states have experienced since the last Federal soldier was withdrawn from their soil." (29)

There were the Ku-Klux exposures, the ridicule of Southern political and religious attitudes, and the uncovering of alleged abuses of justice. The good will engendered between Franklin D. Roosevelt and the South was followed by legislation which affronted the conservative traditions of the region. The willingness of the South to bear its share of the armed crusade to impose the American ideal of equality upon Japan and Germany was followed by the demand that the South apply this ideal to the Negro. Thereby was created an atmosphere of alarm and suspicion over Northern intentions.

In 1930 a group of twelve writers known as the Southern Agrarians published a manifesto justifying the determination of the South to retain its identity in keeping with its conservative traditions. Granting that the past was not recoverable in its old form, the twelve disavowed the progressive outlook as unfit for Southern needs and as a betrayal of a worthy and congenial heritage. The true South they characterized as rural, conservative, stable, and religious. Inherited prejudices against Northerners and against Negro equality were warmly advocated and the modern school and religion turned into sociology were denounced. They believed that the South should revive its agrarian tradition and repudiate the industrial invasion as unsound economically and as deceptive in its humanitarian motivation. As they learned from Sinclair Lewis and others of the standardization which machinery forced upon regions adopting it, they were thankful that this development had been retarded in the South. They shared the disillusion of thoughtful people throughout the world following the First World War, and saw no reason why the South should favor a spirit of liberalism and progress which had failed to solve the problems of other regions.

The Southern Agrarians believe that a conservative South was nearer the reality than the progressive South praised by the liberals. They understand that national standardization has not annihilated the fundamental difference of their beloved section. They know that even though the modern Southerner joins the Westerner and Northerner in adopting a common type of automobile, house and clothes, he has not necessarily surrendered his distinctions of thought and emotions; that reading the same book and attending the same school does not necessarily eliminate provincial thinking. They understand that the conversions of many educated Southerners to the logic of liberalism does not mean that they are willing to put aside inherited habits and live according to the new logic. They know, for example, that few of the many who talk against race prejudice are willing to suffer the inconvenience of violating customary racial barriers; that few who believe that the cause of liberalism can be promoted by having two political parties are willing to incur the displeasure of their conservative neighbors by joining a political party other than the Democratic.

Examination of many of the phases of the institutional life of the New South reveals a constantly recurring condition; despite the changes which the catastrophe of 1865 made inevitable, the distinctive culture of the section was never destroyed. In politics--to cite the most obvious example--the South responded to the suggestion that the Negro be given the equalities mentioned in the Declaration of Independence

(29) Donald Davidson, op. cit., 315.

by reducing the race to political impotence. This, with the acquiescence of the United State Supreme Court, was accomplished by the revision of state constitutions in the 1890's and 1900's. The opening since 1937 of the Democratic primaries to Negroes by the Federal courts effected a change more technical than actual. While there has been considerable increase in colored voters, the new voters merely won the privilege of ratifying procedures already determined by white majorities. An unchallenged caste system prevented the Negro from becoming a candidate for office or from advocating policies contrary to the will of the whites. The sum total of his political gains to date is one member of the Kentucky legislature and one member of the Richmond city council.

A lasting break in the political unity of the white race would give vital significance to the votes of the Negroes. Thereby would it be possible for the minority race to hold the balance of power between white factions. Such a break consequently is the fond hope of the friends of Negro advance. It has not come. It was threatened in 1928 when five states of the so-called Solid South voted against a Democratic candidate for President who violated some of the cherished principles of the section. When two and four years later the name of this candidate was removed from the ballot, the Southern states voted unanimously for Democratic candidates and repudiated the leaders of the 1928 bolt. Again in 1948 was there a threat to political unity when the Southern people unanimously disapproved the desire of the Democratic presidential candidate to extend certain civil rights to the Negroes. The Southern people left to the leaders of the state machines the determination of the method to meet this emergency. In a majority of states these leaders decreed that Southern interests could best be served by supporting the nominee of the traditional party; the voters fell in line. In four states the leaders of the state machines felt that Southern interests could best be served by supporting an independent candidate; the voters fell in line. In no state was white solidarity broken sufficiently to make the Negro vote important.

Although concessions were made to the liberal spirit in regard to the Negro, the South remained adamant in the matter of greatest importance. The bonds of caste, by which the Negro was kept subordinate and underprivileged, were weakened in few respects. In the middle of the twentieth century it was still possible for the demagogue to win political preferment by campaigning against Negro rights; for whites to take jobs away from blacks when members of the superior caste were able and willing to perform the same tasks; for business opportunities to be monopolies of the whites; and for Negroes for all practical purposes to be excluded from the professions of politics, law and engineering. The average white still has three tones to his voice: a normal tone for whites, a "mammy voice" for Negroes with whom he is friendly, and a haughty tone for strange Negroes. The progress of the blacks in health and education was caused by the intervention of benevolent whites, not through the efforts of the blacks themselves. The only equality the black possesses is the right to migrate, to move from job to job, from country to town, from South to North.

In the years since the Civil War there was a steady decline in what the antebellum traveler Frederick Law Olmsted called "the close cohabitation and association of black and white." Immediately after the war

the two races separated in churches, and for the cultural give and take of the plantations was substituted a dual school system which sealed the children of one race from the other. Gradually it became impossible for a white person to teach in a Negro school without losing caste. No longer did the two races have what William Faulkner calls "the same parties: the identical music from identical instruments, crude fiddles and guitars, now in the big house with candles and silk dresses and champagne, now in the dirt-floored cabins with smoking pine knots and calico and water sweetened with molasses."⁽³⁰⁾ The whites have been able to implement their growing aversion for intimate contact with the blacks through the use of labor-saving devices and through the spread of progressive notions concerning the dignity of labor. Despite Supreme Court Decisions, immutable social custom makes for increased residential segregation, especially in the newer sections of the cities. In many places the blacks live so far away from white settlements that the whites find the hiring of them as servants impractical. In fewer numbers are the blacks sitting in the balconies of white theaters or patronizing white physicians and dentists. It is now almost possible for a middle class person to live many years in a Southern city without contacts with blacks.

One of the most persistent legends of the South is that the Negro is in a constant state of revolt against the social patterns of the section. Despite a vast literature to the contrary, the facts of history refute this assumption. As a slave the black man did not attempt general insurrection and did not run away often. "The slaves," says a historian of the Confederacy,⁽³¹⁾ "supported the war unanimously (albeit somewhat involuntarily)." It is now proved that outside compulsions rather than inner ambitions prompted the political insubordinations of Reconstruction. Their artificial character is proved by the fact they were not accompanied by insubordinations in social relations and by the fact that they disappeared as soon as the outside compulsions were removed. Indicative of the willingness of the rank and file of the blacks to accept the status quo are the words of a conservative demagogue who knew the Negro well. If the election of governor of South Carolina, declared Cole L. Blease in 1913,⁽³²⁾ were left "entirely to the Negro vote, I would receive without trouble 75 to 90 per cent." In communities in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee where the blacks have made wide use of the suffrage there has been no assault on white supremacy. This fact is one of the main arguments advanced by Southern liberals in favor of giving them the suffrage. Of late, the prospective Negro voters have abandoned the comparatively independent Republican party in order to join a party completely dominated by their white neighbors. They vote, not for Henry Wallace and others who practice race equality, but for those who at best render only lip service to this principle.

That the Negroes are not in revolt against the white pattern of civilization is best illustrated by their conduct in a field of action in which they possess perfect freedom. This is religion. They voluntarily are the whites in this field. They join the whites in maintaining the orthodoxies and in creating

(30) Absalom, Absalom! (New York, 1936) p. 98

(31) Robert S. Cotterhill, The Old South (Glendale, 1936) p. 317.

a black counterpart to almost every one of the white denominations. If the masses of the whites are Baptists or premillennialists, so are the masses of the blacks; if the upper-class whites are Episcopalians or Presbyterians, so are the upper-class blacks. If denominations like Catholicism, Unitarianism and Congregationalism make little headway among the whites, the same is true of the blacks. If skepticism and atheism make little appeal to Southern whites, the same is true of the Southern blacks. Among them there is no relapse into paganism, African or otherwise. The lessons taught from the Bible by the slavemasters are still the Negro faith.

The untamed religious freedom of the country likewise gives the dominant whites convincing opportunity to reveal their distinct Southernism. In 1949, as in 1859, the South is the area of Christendom most steadfast in the historic faith. While rituals and imagery are modified to suit modern customs, doctrinal affirmations remain the same as those of seventeenth century ancestors. There are no open unbelievers among the middle and upper classes; the unchurched among the lower classes become believers when they move to town or go to school. Religion is the one subject of discussion in public gatherings of a non-utilitarian character; secular forums are almost unknown. There is an unofficial union of church and state; politicians must be professed Christians; political gatherings are opened with prayer, and public schools are unconsciously permeated with religious teachings despite constitutional prohibitions. The lack of religious fervor of the upper classes finds compensation in the rising of the multitudes to the level of historic Methodist and Baptist faiths and of the new premillennial confessions. In the South there is no confusion of tongues; sectarian differences are based on race, class, or ecclesiastical politics; there is a magnificent unity of doctrine.

Southerners cherish to the highest degree the great educational superstition: that the school is the panacea for all the ills of society. If the unsuspecting stranger studies the plans of the section's schools, he may imagine that their purpose is not only to make Southern youths into Northerners but even to make them into communists of the variety Plato describes in The Republic. Textbooks written in the North give an anti-Southern bias to instruction in history, literature and speech, and the school seemingly is attempting to usurp many of the functions of child nurture traditionally belonging to the home.

But among Southerners there is the education that does not educate. This result in part is caused by the temperament of a people inclined to be lazy and unintellectual and even philistine. It is also caused by the survival of overwhelming traditions. Northern bias in textbooks is offset by less formal and perhaps more effective indoctrination in local ideals which survive the regimentation of the schools. The many Northern professors who teach in Southern colleges feel obligated not always reluctantly, to acquire the regional bias. The home, not the school, determines the cultural outlook of Southerners. It is remarkable how seldom the problems raised in the classroom are discussed in the marketplace or around the dinner table; how perfect is the freedom of speech enjoyed by the teacher because few bother to report what the teacher has told; and how unused is the public to listen to the collective opinion of teachers

or students; and how even lessons in a subject so "scientific" as cooking have difficulty in changing the home diets. How little the college or university affects its surroundings is revealed by the fact that the voluntary reading habits of this community are exactly the same as those of the non-academic community. Proof of this comes from the comparison of the magazines sold in corner drug stores. The professor of social relations does not try to project his theory of social determinism and of race equality into his everyday contacts.

The South accepts Northern dictation in literary matters more completely than in other fields. A book, even one about the South and by a Southerner, wins little attention from Southerners unless published in New York. In order to win the approval of New York, the Southern author often feels obligated to use a critical realism or romantic irony which involves a repudiation of the Southern past. Many among educated Southerners commit a major crime against intelligence; instead of letting their opinions of state or section grow out of their own observations, they accept the opinions of New York journalists as paraphrased for them by their local newspapers. Southern newspapers are not inclined to look or to think for themselves.

There is danger, however, of overemphasizing literary materials in measuring the outlook of a people, especially of a people as non-literary as those of the South. The great mass of Southern readers ignores the realistic writings, nourishing itself on the self-flattery of the romances of the past. Many among the minority who read the new realism do not connect it with life, regarding it as a vacuous escape into a sentimental world which they do not actually wish to enter. Moreover, the new school of Southern writers belongs to the South to a greater degree than earlier critics realized. This has expression in the sensational success of Margaret Mitchell's Gone with the Wind, an obvious glorification of the Southern tradition. It is now realized that behind the stinking vulgarity of Erskine Caldwell lies a lusty and even humorous appreciation of the poor white; that behind the seemingly unreasoning violence of William Faulkner lies a legend of the South as patriotic as it is pessimistic; that James Branch Cabell despite his self-protective irreverence is able to move among medieval legends with a sense of continuity with aristocratic Virginia; and that Ellen Glasgow despite her bleak landscapes and progressive hopes has compassion for her unprogressive Virginians. Disseminated through the social comments of Southern men of letters is a modesty which makes possible a freedom from that note of political rectitude and absolutist contempt for the individual which is interent in those for whom things and individuals are just so much energy to be harnessed for
(33)
virtuous purposes.

Forces work against the apparent progress from rural stagnation to urbanization. People who move from country to city and from farm to factory do not surrender their rural ideals. In the South the country conquers the city as effectively as elsewhere the city conquers the country. The larger Southern cities grow, the less do they become cities in a cultural sense; unlike the cities of Europe and the North, they do not develop such urban arts as the theater, the drama and music; nor do they have good cooking in public places. This is because a larger and larger proportion of their inhabitants possesses rural back-

(33)

Herbert M. McLuhan in Allen Tate, ed., A Southern Vanguard (New York, 1948), 105.

grounds and is naturally most interested in country pleasures. The wealthy of the new Southern cities spend their surpluses on farms, country estates, horses, hogs, hunting, and dity houses in country style.

The march toward America's ideal of democracy is stayed that the splendid legend of the Old South may be preserved. "Perpetually suspended in the great haze of memory, it hangs, as it were, poised, somewhere between earth and sky, colossal, shining, and incomparably lovely."⁽³⁴⁾ The attitude of the old agrarian aristocracy continued to be a living part of the Southern tradition, not only for the thirty-five years after 1865 but also for the twentieth century. Everyone who claimed to be a planter was metamorphosed into a Marse Chan or a Squire Effingham. "The Southerner feels," writes William Van Conner in 1948,⁽³⁵⁾ "that the antebellum world . . . possessed values and away-of-life in which the needs of the whole human being could be more readily satisfied than they could be in our industrialized society."

Ancestor-hunting became an important activity. "Even today from Virginia to Texas," said William A. Percy in 1941,⁽³⁶⁾ "ten thousand crepuscular old maids and widows in ghostly coveys and clusters are solving such insoluble problems." Many persons tie themselves to baronial planters and some--if we accept the words of Stark Young and James Branch Cabell--trace descent from the Lost Tribes of Israel. Such an attitude tends to create an atrophying pessimism, an incomplete and frustrated region, as William Faulkner puts it, a region vainly trying to recover its own identity, vainly trying to relieve its legendary past. This attitude also possesses dynamic and constructive social functions. A consciousness of illustrious forebears gives satisfactions like those of religion to old people without material assets. It gives justification to the ambitions or attainments of self-made men, freeing them of inferiority complexes and getting them into the best society. It gives rise to the cult of antique furniture, the reproduction of which is the most appreciated thing of beauty the twentieth century South produces.

The changing South of the legend works both ways. Changes in the direction of national uniformity are accompanied by changes in the opposite direction. Importance among these is the disappearance of the fear of the hot climate inherited from North European ancestors. This is because of the invention of artificial ice, refrigeration and air-conditioning, and because of the elimination of such climatic evils as yellow fever, malaria, and hook worm. The Victorian habiliments of the ancestors have been discarded in favor of looser and lighter garments. The Victorian reticence of the maiden has been replaced by a nakedness almost as complete and almost as lacking in self-consciousness as that of a pagan goddess. The South has learned to worship its hot sun as a beneficent god; this is a substitute for a previous fear of the sun as a cruel

(34) Wilbur J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York, 1942) p. 124.

(35) In Allen Tate, ed., op. cit., 94.

(36) Lanterns on the Lovee (New York, 1941) p. 38.

tyrant. Its curative properties, in the opinion of Rupert B. Vance, (37) is protection for rural Southerners against lack of sanitary precautions. No longer do Southerners cherish the superstition that white men cannot work under its direct rays. Sun baths are indulged in for two reasons: because of health and because of an esthetic revolution which holds that a brown skin is more beautiful than a fair one. The acme of Southern comeliness is blue eyes, white teeth, blond hair and bronze skins.

Many of the regional characteristics herewith listed are survivals out of a dark past and are persistently condemned by outsiders. If they are defended by Southerners, it is with fundamental qualifications. The New South has no intention of declaring "a positive good" those aspects of its behavior which affront the conscience of the national majority. The contemporary South, however, finds it not only possible but strategically wise to defend as "positively good" certain of its peculiar tendencies and ambitions. These are tendencies and ambitions which, unlike the pro-slavery argument of the Old South, do not run counter to the liberal sentiments of the outside world. The South, long accused of tyranny against others, can, with a show of reason, accuse others of tyranny against it.

"Positively good" is the demand that the section be allowed to adjust its manner of artistic expression to its climate and to the temperament of its people. Because of the tyranny of books and magazines imported from strange climates, Southerners are led to construct artificial lakes, treeless lawns, and low-roofed houses without porches or blinds. These lakes are often mosquito-infested and slimy or muddy, the lawns often bare and unkempt, and the houses often uncomfortably hot for six months in the year. Southern suburbs possess the chaotic appearance of a parade of circus cages. The newer public monuments sometimes stress the nude, the sensational and the realistic. Comfort demands a return to the tangled gardens, to the shade-giving trees, to the high-roofed halls and porches of the ante-bellum homes, and to monuments in which the Christian reticence and the classical ideals of the region are respected. Southerners have as much right to their peculiar tastes as have other peoples.

One of the prices of progressive industrialization of the South is increasing servitude to Northern capital. New York has grown into the most autocratic city state of modern times, with the Southern province of the United States as its most important colony. The great financial houses of that and kindred cities control most of the region's strategic industries, having sent out a second and a third generation of carpetbaggers to found factories or to purchase those already existing. The South's coal fields and iron reserves are held by the nation's financial titans--the Morgans, the Mellons, and Fords, and the Rockefellers. All sixteen corporations controlling the section's oil wells are non-local in ownership, with the Morgans, Mellons, Fords and Rockefellers again in the top places. "All the major railroad systems," said the President's Report on the Economic Condition of the South in 1938, "are owned and controlled elsewhere. . . . Most of the great electric holding companies that furnish the light, heat and power for

(37) Human Geography of the South, 361.

Southern homes and industries, are directed, managed and owned by outsiders. Likewise, the transportation and distribution of natural gas, one of the South's greatest assets is almost completely in the hands of remote financial institutions." The existence of Northern patent monopolies and the absence of machine manufacturing permits outside direction even in industries locally owned. Manufacturing is mainly confined to the elementary processes; the South fabricates its own cast-iron pipes, steel rails, bridges and oils, but not its hardware, locomotives and automobiles. The South does not produce radios, clocks, surgical instruments, dynamos, clothes, drugs, and many other finished products requiring the highest skill to produce and bringing in the highest profits.

Retail profits are siphoned out of the section in ever-growing proportions by Northern-owned chain stores. Only a few of the "specialty" articles made excessively profitable through national advertising are controlled by Southerners. The Southern business man is a mere factor or agent for Northern principals, who control both production and distribution. His function is to sell the gasoline, automobiles, mechanical refrigerators, alcoholic beverages, clothing, insurance policies, foodstuffs, and a hundred other articles endeared to the Southern public through advertising. Some of these articles are as worthless as the wooden nutmeg the Yankee peddler is said to have imposed upon the public in ante-bellum days. The burden of these purchases on a relatively poor people is devastating. In 1937 an economist ⁽³⁸⁾ estimated that the South was paying out a billion dollars annually in excess of its income. It balanced its credit by selling property to investors from other sections of the country, by borrowing, by going bankrupt, and by destroying lands and forests to secure immediate incomes.

Apparently there is no effective remedy for this situation. The Federal government, through its policies of protective tariffs, constitutional immunities to corporation, railroad rate discriminations, and patent monopolies, customarily favors the old manufacturing centers of the country. The possibility of the South revolting against its debtor status, in the manner of the Revolutionary planters against their British creditors, is ruled out by the outcome of the Civil War. Legislative remedies are also eliminated through the decisions of the Supreme Court against confiscatory acts by states. That Southern leaders are able to reconcile the sons and grandsons of those who followed Robert E. Lee and William Jennings Bryan to the economic domination of the North caused an eminent historian to cry out bitterly in 1942. "We are confronted," said Benjamin B. Kendrick, ⁽³⁹⁾ "with a paradox more amazing and ironical than any ever conjured by the imagination of Gilbert and Sullivan. The people of the South, who all their lives have suffered deprivations, want and humiliation from outside financial imperialism, followed with hardly a murmur of protest leaders who, if indirectly, were nonetheless agents and attorneys of the imperialists."

(38) Daniel C. Coyle in The Virginia Quarterly Review, XIII, 192 (Spring, 1937)

(39) Journal of Southern History, VII, 49 (February, 1942).

However, there were protests which excited the moral sympathies of those liberals the world over who condemn colonial exploitation. William Faulkner croats in his hideous character Popeye a compendium of the rape and corruption which alien finance capital visits upon this novelist's section. Academicians like Walter P. Webb of Texas and Howard W. Odum of North Carolina furnished the facts concerning the South's plight and President Franklin D. Roosevelt's National Emergency Council and Governor Ellis G. Arnall of Georgia have broadcast these facts.

Some economists regard the Roosevelt policy of heavy expenditures by the Federal government a means of lessening the annual excess of expenditures over receipts which an uncontrolled system of capitalistic enterprise imposes upon the South. It is believed that the levying of high Federal income taxes according to ability to pay, and the expenditure of these revenues according to the degree of human need, mean a shift of resources from the wealthier North to the poorer South. The expenditures of the period of the Second World War and its aftermath create an unparalleled prosperity which has resulted in a greater proportional increase in Southern incomes and has allowed Southerners to retire a considerable portion of their debts. Southern ports like Hampton Roads and New Orleans impinge upon the commercial monopoly of New York City. The partial victory of Arnall and other Southern governors against freight rate discriminations may presage a reversal of a long-established Federal policy of favoritism to patrons of Northern carriers. The Tennessee Valley development is a magnificent gesture by the Federal government toward redressing the grievances of the South against the rapacity of Wendell Willkie and other financiers who captured the section's electric power. The success of this experiment may lead to its duplication in other areas as a means of redressing the balance against the Southern and other regional economies.

Under the direction of Southern entrepreneurs one great Southern industry has annexed the whole United States as a province. This is tobacco under the direction of the Dukes and the Reynolds. Other comparable successes are coca-cola and patent medicines. The South's most mature industry, cotton textiles, has learned to make fabrics of the finest quality, and under such trade names as Cannon, Dan River and Avondale is capturing some of the most profitable markets of the country. This may be followed by triumphs in other fields; for Southern labor is growing more skilled and Southern business more cunning. The workingman is astir with the obvious intention of exacting the highest possible wages out of employers, be they local or Northern. The Southern farmer is giving up his traditional conservatism to form trade agreements and crop reduction compacts to exact the highest prices from Northern consumers.

Perhaps the greatest threat to the integrity of the regional life is that the South will succumb to bribes offered by the wealthier section of the United States. There is precedent for such behavior. Robert E. Lee's refusal to accept a sinecure from a Northern business concern did not prevent other ex-Confederate generals from doing so. The Reconstruction period was scarcely over before many were on the payroll of the former enemy country as members of Congress. In the 1880's the ex-Confederate generals and other leaders of Southern opinion took action which had the earmarks of scalawagism. Northern business men invaded every Southern state offering the gospel of prosperity. They invited the local leaders to what one

historian picturesquely calls the Great Barbecue. These leaders, with few exceptions, accepted places at the table in order to participate in the profits of the new business. They became the agents or hired attorneys of the invading capitalists. The Great Barbecue continues to the present, with the table growing longer and longer to make room for a greater variety of Southern leaders. The hospitality grows so generous that a recent Georgia writer believes that both sides in the struggle for the control of state affairs receive financial support from the capitalists. (40)

Southern social scientists and educators receive subsidies from the great capitalistic philanthropies of the North for the purpose of carrying on researches which, at least by implication, discredit the traditional race and social distinctions of the South. Inherited concepts of states' rights are set aside in order that Southern politicians, business men, farmers and commoners may share in the ever-increasing Federal bounties. Donald Davidson (41) thinks that under the reforming zeal of Federal social planners the Tennessee Valley may become a region of forests, pastures, and lakes in which the once busy grower of tobacco or cotton will be "a tipped purveyor and professional friend to tippling fishermen."

That the South is willing to sacrifice moral and even religious principles for the proverbial mess of pottage is illustrated by the repeal of Prohibition. A five-decade battle against Demon Rum culminated in every Southern state giving its consent to the Eighteenth Amendment. Some who felt that they knew the region well believed that Prohibition had become the Eleventh Commandment, a fixed principle of morality and religion, a fruition of the Southern combination of puritanism and reticence. The unexpected happened. All the Southern states except Mississippi repealed Prohibition. A New York dominated national administration wanted the revival of the liquor industry as a means of escaping the Great Depression of 1929. At its behest, the Baptist and life-long Prohibitionist who was governor of Virginia changed his views overnight. Revenue-hungry Southern politicians saw in a revived liquor traffic a rich source of income. The South Carolina legislature, half repentant over its violation of a righteous heritage, reenacted Prohibition on condition that substitute revenues be found for the inevitable losses. No substitute was found and South Carolina continued wet.

At present the South is confronted with the greatest temptation of its history. It is offered a special favor if it will make a special concession. The special favor is a larger proportion of the Federal aids to education proposed by the Truman administration. The special concession is that the South admit both races to the same school. Since Reconstruction the region has maintained separate schools for the two races. Recently under the influence of its liberal thinkers it has accepted the principle that the Negro schools should be as well supported financially as those of the whites. Outsiders reject this compromise, asserting that the schools should be used to iron out the greatest American social distinction, namely,

(40) Calvin Kittle, "A Long, Dark Night for Georgia?" Harper's Magazine, vol. 197, pp. 57-58 (September, 1946)

(41) The Tennessee (New York, 1948) II, 305.

that between Southern white and Southern Negro. The Truman Civil Rights Commission asserts that so great is the blight of the separation of the Negro from the white caste that equality coming from equal financial support of separate school systems is illusory. It is hinted that federal appropriations be allocated only to those school systems which mix the races.

If the Truman administration carries out this threat to the bi-racial school, the South may swallow the bait. It adheres uncritically to the quantitative theory of school improvements, that the bigger the appropriations and the larger the enrollments the better the schools. It smarts under the humiliation of being constantly reminded that it does not spend as much on its schools as other sections of the United States. If it consents to having the two races together in the same classrooms, the resentment created thereby will be comparable to that induced by the forced equalities of the Reconstruction period. Such a reaction would be natural because the reform if carried out in good faith would mean a free mingling of the sexes of the two races. Thereby would result the problem of interracial marriage, an inevitable outcome in a country where young people choose their mates with a minimum of parental interference.

A pertinent question at this point is: Does the country wish to supplement the democracy of mixed schools by the democracy of miscegenation? The South feels that were it to accept the latter reform the mulatto South thereby created would be jimmied by other Americans in very much the same manner as it today jimmies the Negro.

"I wish," said a Georgia professor recently, "that Miss Millie would come back to life and drive the rascals out with her broomstick." The Georgian was referring to Mildred D. Rutherford, a publicist who defended the South by sharp attacks on Northerners, and to the imported critics of Southern ways in Southern universities who have created an inferiority complex among Southern youths. These critics make comparisons between the region's creature comforts and those of the rest of the nation: the comparative scarcity of house paint, plumbing, hospital beds, individual wealth, balanced diets, neat lawns and barns, magazine and newspaper readers, new automobiles, and the thousand and one conveniences and tricks which distinguish Northern life. They have established the legend of a gully-washed land inhabited by a lazy and contented people.

The South has taken to heart these criticisms and derived much benefit from them. It does not want to experience again the privations of the 1860's when war cut communications with the more progressive section of the United States. At the same time there should be a measuring of Northern criticisms. Perhaps what is said today may be a mere repetition of British travelers condemnation, a hundred years ago, of Kentucky for being shabbier and poorer than very neat and very rich Ohio. Such criticism was as unintelligent as condemning you or me as a wastrel because neither of us is as rich as the richest man in town. Because the South today is not as rich as the rest of the richest country on earth does not prove that the region below the Potomac is poor and unprogressive. The region is fabulously rich compared with the neighboring countries of Central and South America, richer indeed than any large area of the world outside

the United States.

It is time to be philosophical about Southern backwardness. History and geography explain in part the relative lack of material progress. An additional explanation is that the people of the section, in the name of worldly ease or Christian ideals, prefer contentment to chasing after material values which do not lead to paradise. (42) "In taking on work," says a discerning student of the sectional differences, "the new South has not forgotten everything else." The Southerner's conception of common sense is not gratified by spending all his idle moments or all his years of retirement in keeping his house and garden perfectly neat, as many Northerners do; his sense of values calls for recreations, even dissipations, at the expense of physical perfections. The self-respecting Southerner, unlike the self-respecting Northerner, is not absorbed by the need of saving for old age. If worse come to worse the Southerner can achieve social security at the expense of usually willing relatives.

Recent history is characterized by renewed challenges to the principle of minority self-determination. Northern political parties, vying for the support of Negro migrants, again are demanding the blotting out of many of the South's race distinctions. The South is able to strike back, not only with a show of justice, but with a good chance of being able to maintain its traditional position. It feels that it has the Constitution on its side in matters of intimate concern. It believes that America is not ready to become a consolidated democracy at the expense of the concept of the federal republic. It believes it possesses the right to deal with the blacks within the limits of the national conscience. That it does may violate widely held concepts of democracy; but so does the prevailing capitalistic system of America with its ill-gotten gains and its unequal distribution of wealth.

The pressures in favor of national standardization have been great and the surrenders numerous. One critic finds the South "a sheer love of the up-to-date," a conscious going "after a streamlined industrialization that is elsewhere not so expressly planned," and "a triumphant 'progressive' education which progresses even faster than in the North and which has been rushing school systems off into a life of sin as fast as they are born." (43) Nevertheless the South is proud of the fact that for sixty years it has been able to couple an unsuspected loyalty to the nation with customs and folkways which vary most from the national monotony. It retains its own manners, its own speech, its own temperament, and those thousand and one subtle peculiarities through which the uniformity of the section with the nation turns out to be more a myth than a reality. The Southern people, says Professor Norman Foerster after ten years' absence from North Carolina, (44) "impress one at once with their different voices, different accent, their sense of manners, the courtesy that appears in all classes, their organic folksiness (as if of one family), their awareness of the past as a force both hampering and helping."

(42)

Norman Foerster in North Carolina Historical Review, XXIII, 224 (April, 1946)

(43)

Robert M. Heilman in Allen Tate, ed., op.cit., 127

(44)

Op. loc., XXIII, 222.

The typical Southerner is too unconscious of his provincial peculiarities to feel that they need defending. There are others who know enough about the assaults from the outside to strike back. They feel that the inhabitants of the region understand its problems better than sociological and pedagogical engineers from the North, that they have as much right to maintain their social distinctions as other sections of a class and hierarchy-ridden world. They believe that the preservation of civilization as they understand it hinges on the prevention of the contamination of race that Richard M. Weaver⁽⁴⁵⁾ says is poison to a well disciplined social order.

(45) Ideas Have Consequences (Chicago, 1948)